



CONGRESSWOMAN
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PRESS RELEASE

**Rosa DeLauro Statement of Deeply Harmful, Across-the-Board Budget Cuts
on Women and Families**

As everyone has heard by now, Friday March 1 marked the beginning of the deeply harmful, across-the-board budget cuts that will cost our country hundreds of thousands of jobs and harm our economic recovery. I am particularly concerned about the affects these cuts will have on programs that provide critical services to needy women and their families.

I chaired a hearing on Friday, March 8 at which representatives from Head Start, WIC, Meals on Wheels, community health centers and a woman-owned small business directly told members of Congress what would happen to their programs. They eloquently spoke about what these cuts mean to every day women, their families and their children.

Put simply, it is not a pretty picture; some women will be forced with the painful choice of a paycheck versus child care. Others will have to weigh whether to buy groceries or visit the doctor. And these cuts will cost all Americans jobs that otherwise would have helped encourage the ongoing recovery.

The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office and Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke agree these cuts could cost us as many as 750,000 jobs this year alone. While there will be a ripple effect throughout the economy, many of the jobs destroyed will be public sector jobs that women disproportionately hold.

To take just a few examples, cuts to Head Start could cost 14,000 teachers, teachers' assistants and staff their jobs. Cuts to Title I education grants means 10,500 more teachers and aide jobs lost. Cuts to special education will force the layoff of 7,400 more. Almeta Keys, Executive Director of a Head Start center in Washington, told us about the sacrifices her center has already had to make and the impact it has had on the kids they are trying to educate. Ms. Keys said that in Washington, DC alone, the loss of almost \$1.2 million in Head Start funding would eliminate services for 200 children. Head Start centers there, and across the nation, will have no choice but to reduce access to critical early education.

These job losses are in addition to all the other cuts, impacting everything from education to health care, food safety inspections to nutrition aid, the public safety to air traffic control. And as Fatima Goss Graves of the National Women's Law Center said at the hearing, all of these cuts are completely preventable.

Toni Ann Gianforti is grants manager at Meals on Wheels of Central Maryland and told us how they help seniors who would otherwise be “hidden and forgotten.” Yet, Meals on Wheels nationally is facing the loss of \$41 million in funding, compounding already-existing budget challenges. They may have to reduce service days, or serve just one meal a day instead of two, which “shifts a far greater financial burden” onto seniors in the long-term.

Because of these cuts, 25,000 low-income women may lose access to the breast and cervical cancer screenings that could save their lives. Hundreds of thousands of unemployed and dislocated workers will lose access to job training services. The families of 30,000 children will lose access to child care assistance. Millions of Americans get their health care at a Community Health Center, as we heard from Lolita Lopez, who works with underserved populations at one such center. She eloquently described to the representatives in attendance how her center is already struggling and these cuts will only make things worse.

Heather Miranda serves as a board member of the National WIC Association and told us how in North Carolina cutting WIC by five percent would result in about 18,300 current participants losing access to the program. She stressed that cuts to WIC will cost more than it saves, as families will be faced with long-term health consequences from inadequate nutrition during pregnancy and in early childhood.

Patrina Clark owns a small business and told us how difficult it already is to get a loan from the Small Business Administration and how much harder it will become. Business owners who deal with the SBA, and other government agencies, will deeply hurt women small business owners. As she said: “The women owners of small businesses are feeling especially vulnerable right now...I, like many other business owners, are hoping not just to fight another day, but to thrive.”

But beyond all the stories we heard, the real issue is what can be done to stop these cuts from hurting millions of Americans. I asked the women you read about above to testify so that members of Congress will know what these cuts mean to the women and their families who rely on these and other critical services. And I need you to do the same; everyone who cares about these issues needs to make their voice heard. Unfortunately, we have not yet seen a political consensus around the issue.

For months, since long before these draconian budget cuts went into effect, Democrats were putting forth their ideas on how to stop them and asking Republicans to join us in finding a balanced solution. But Republicans were not interested in doing so, and America now finds itself dealing with the consequences.

However, you can be sure that no matter how tough the fight, I will not rest while some Americans still need help climbing the ladder of opportunity. The conviction that government should do everything possible to help those who are struggling is why I got into public service and it is why I will continue to advocate for your needs.

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